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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; FEBRUARY 3, 2010

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo
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Pak Nam-gi for Botched Currency Reform

JoongAng Ilbo, KBS, MBC
U.S. Quadrennial Defense Review: "USFK to be Deployed Overseas in
Three to Four Years"

Dong-a Ilbo
Candidate Registration Begins for June 2 Local Elections,
Which May Serve as "Midterm Evaluation of
Lee Myung-bak Administration"

Hankook Ilbo
Education Ministry's Involvement in Election of Superintendents of
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Hankyoreh Shinmun
ROKG Allegedly Downplayed Expected Flood Damage
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Segye Ilbo
Pentagon: "N. Korea to Mount Nuclear Warhead
on ICBM within Decade"
Seoul Shinmun
Twitter Emerges as New Medium for Local Election Campaigns

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

President Lee Myung-bak, during a Feb. 2 Cabinet meeting, stressed
that the leaders of the two Koreas should meet under a premise that
there can be no reward for a summit. (All)

Unification Minister Hyun In-taek, in a Feb. 2 meeting with the
foreign press here, said that a desirable summit meeting between the
two Koreas is one that contributes to resolving the nuclear issue
and humanitarian problems, such as the issue of ROK prisoners of war
and abductees held in North Korea. (All)

Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell arrived in Seoul yesterday to discuss pending bilateral issues, including the North's nuclear issue, with ROKG officials. He was quoted as telling reporters upon arrival: "It is still too early to be talking about (North Korea) sanctions relief, given that we have not had a resumption of (the Six-Party) Talks." (Hankook, Segye, Seoul, MBC, YTN)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

According to the "Ballistic Missile Defense Review" released on Feb. 1 by the Pentagon, North Korea will achieve the necessary technology to mount a nuclear warhead onto an intercontinental ballistic missile within a decade. (All)

The report also said that although the test launches of the North's Taepodong-2 missiles in 2006 and 2009 were deemed unsuccessful, it is assumed that sooner or later North Korea will have a successful test of its Taepodong-2. (All)

The Pentagon's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), on the other hand, made it clear that the so-called "strategic flexibility" for rapid deployment of USFK abroad to conflict regions will be strengthened after the introduction of three-year, family accompanied tours by USFK in the coming years. (All)

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According to "Good Friends," a North Korean human rights group in the ROK, North Korea appears to be suffering from severe economic conditions after its market mechanism was paralyzed in the wake of last November's sweeping currency reform; many North Koreans are dying of hunger. (Dong-a, Hankook)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-N. Korea

Most ROK media covered Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell's arrival in Seoul yesterday to discuss pending bilateral issues, including North Korea's nuclear issue, with ROKG officials.

He was quoted as telling reporters upon arrival: "It is still too early to be talking about (North Korea) sanctions relief, given that we have not had a resumption of (the Six-Party) Talks."

With regard to growing talks of a possible inter-Korean summit, sparked by President Lee Myung-bak's remark that he may meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il this year, all media gave attention to President Lee's remarks during a Feb. 2 Cabinet meeting, in which he said that the leaders of the two Koreas should meet under a premise that there can be no reward for a summit. He was further quoted: "The summit between the two Koreas may only be pursued under firm principles. It won't be realized unless these principles are satisfied."

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo's sub-heading read: "Lee's Remarks are a Clear Message to N. Korea that He is Different from His Predecessors."

The Pentagon's "Ballistic Missile Defense Review" report released on Feb. 1 received wide press attention. According to media reports, the Ballistic Missile Defense Review said that North Korea will achieve the necessary technology to mount a nuclear warhead onto an intercontinental ballistic missile within a decade. The report was also cited as saying: "Although the test launches of the North's Taepodong-2 missiles in 2006 and 2009 were deemed unsuccessful, it is assumed that sooner or later North Korea will have a successful test of its Taepodong-2."

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo editorialized: "The Pentagon made it clear that the planned transfer of wartime operational control to the ROK will be carried out in two years as scheduled. This move is not appropriate for the ROK's security situation given the possibility that the North will possess an ICBM with a nuclear warhead. If things go as planned, the threats from North Korea will increase and USFK's deterrence, on the contrary, will decline."

Citing a diplomatic source in Beijing, conservative Chosun Ilbo front-paged a report saying that the North Korean regime apparently sacked the Workers' Party's Finance Director Pak Nam-gi, letting him take the fall for the failed currency reform late last year. The report went on to quote some North Korea watchers in China as predicting that the North Korean regime may perform a U-turn back to timid market reforms, now that Pak, who led the crusade against capitalism, has been fired."

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

U.S. MAY MOVE USFK TO OTHER LOCATIONS AFTER OPCON TRANSFER
(Chosun Ilbo, February 3, Page 35)

The U.S. Department of Defense unveiled its Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) on Monday and in it revealed that, "The status of U.S. forces in Korea is changing from being forward-deployed to forward-stationed with family members," meaning USFK personnel will be required to stay longer when they are accompanied by their

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families. "When fully implemented, this change will enable forces to deploy from the ROK, helping to expand the pool of available forces for global contingencies."

At present, the U.S. government is in the process of changing the current one-year (family-unaccompanied) tours to three-year family accompanied tours for the 28,500 USFK troops, and says an entirely new method of deployment will be implemented over the next three to four years. The report says this will enable the USFK to be re-deployed to other conflict areas in the world at any time.

The QDR, issued every four years, serves as the guide for U.S. defense spending and troop deployment. Since 2000, Washington has been seeking to free overseas troops from being tied to a particular geographic region through a cost-saving program dubbed "strategic flexibility." Washington has assured Seoul that no special changes would happen to the USFK, but as the latest report says, the USFK will not only protect the ROK from a possible invasion by the North but also allow for deployment elsewhere, if USFK's status is changed from "forward-deployed" to "forward-stationed." That could signify that the USFK could become less of a deterrent to North Korea.

"We are in close cooperation with the (South) Korean government to implement the plans that have already been agreed upon," adding that the transfer of full operational control of Korean troops to Seoul will take place as scheduled on April 17, 2012. It appears that the U.S. is determined to hand over the primary burden of defense to the ROK government.

In its Ballistic Missile Defense Review, the U.S. Department of Defense on Tuesday acknowledged the progress North Korea has made in missile technology and predicted that the North will be able to mount a nuclear warhead onto a long-range missile within 10 years. Nonetheless, the U.S. intends to hand over wartime operational control of ROK troops to Seoul in 2012 and free American troops on the peninsula to serve in other areas one or two years later.

The Defense Ministry responded the matter "needs to be discussed over the mid- to long term" and added that it would seek "remedial measures." But an issue as important as this cannot be resolved through patch-up solutions. The U.S. and the ROK must approach the issue at the highest level of government and begin negotiations as soon as possible to look for alternative measures.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is

identical to the Korean version.)

U.S. BRACES FOR N. KOREA'S ICBM WITH A NUCLEAR WARHEAD, BUT WE...
(Dong-a Ilbo, February 3, Page 35)

The Ballistic Missile Defense Review released on February 1 by the U.S. Department of Defense said that North Korea will be able to achieve the necessary technology to mount a nuclear warhead onto a ballistic missile within a decade. The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), another report issued by the Pentagon the same day stated that it is urgent (that we) counter threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and prevent nuclear proliferation. This clearly shows that the USG's key strategy is to come up with measures against North Korean threats which are expected to escalate further.

A change in the U.S.'s defense strategy is closely related to a change in international developments. Many countries joined the Iraq war and Afghan war, which the U.S. started. A change in the U.S.'s strategy for regional conflicts considerably affects the foreign policy of other countries. This is why the ROK is watching with a keen interest any policy change in the U.S., which is its ally.

What draws our special attention in the Pentagon's reports is North Korea's military build-up and a change in the U.S. Forces in Korea (USFK). The U.S. assumed that sooner or later North Korea will have a successful test of its Taepodong-2. This is a worst-case

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scenario, in which the North is capable of deploying nuclear weapons. The Pentagon laid out specific measures to thwart WMD proliferation, including border control of related countries. The U.S. reaffirmed its determination to curb nuclear weapons and WMD even by blocking North Korea.

The Pentagon said that the so-called "strategic flexibility" for rapid deployment of USFK abroad to conflict regions will be strengthened after the introduction of three-year, family accompanied tours by the U.S. Forces in Korea in the coming years. The Pentagon made it clear that the planned transfer of wartime operational control to the ROK will be carried out in two years as scheduled. This move is not appropriate for the ROK's security situation given the possibility that the North will possess an ICBM with a nuclear warhead. If things go as planned, the threats from North Korea will increase and USFK's deterrence, on the contrary, will decline.

We should not allow a security vacuum to occur due to a gap between the U.S.'s global strategy and the ROK's defense strategy. The ROK-U.S. alliance is designed to prevent such a dangerous situation. The U.S. prioritizes its global strategy even though it stresses cooperation with its allies including the ROK. We need to devise measures in order to counter North Korean threats while engaging in discussions with the U.S. The core of the ROK's foreign and security policy should be to remove "asymmetrical" threats including the North's nuclear weapons and missiles.

FEATURES -----

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CAMPBELL: "IT IS TOO EARLY TO BE TALKING ABOUT
SANCTIONS RELIEF"
(Hankook Ilbo, February 3, 2010, Page 3)

By Reporter Yoo In-ho

Attention drawn to the coordination of stances on an inter-Korean summit

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell visited the ROK on February 2.

After arriving at Gimpo Airport in Seoul, Assistant Secretary

Campbell told reporters, "It is still too early to be talking about (North Korea) sanctions relief, given that we have not had a resumption of (the Six-Party) Talks," adding, "In fact, in recent days we have seen provocative actions, with artillery firing and the like. So, I think that is one of the things that we want to do while we are here in Seoul, is to communicate closely and coordinate with our partners here." He also stated, "It is going to be very important for North Korea to come back to the Six Party Talks, to abide by its commitments made in 2005 and 2007, and that within that context, the United States is prepared to work with our partners in South Korea, China, Japan, (and others.)"

Assistant Secretary Campbell plans to meet with the ROK's Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Yong-joon on February 3 to talk about pending issues related to the ROK-U.S. alliance, such as the transfer of wartime operational control and the relocation of U.S. bases, and the North Korean nuclear issue.

Of particular note is that in a series of meetings with Senior Secretary to the President for Foreign Affairs and National Security Kim Sung-hwan, Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan and Unification Minister Hyun In-taek, Assistant Secretary Campbell is expected to coordinate stances with the ROK on an inter-Korean summit, which is being prepared behind the scenes.

STEPHENS